



## Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

*Your Residential Utility  
Consumer Advocate*

# CONSUMER FACT SHEET

### Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

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# KEEP UTILITIES ON WITH A 30-DAY MEDICAL CERTIFICATE



### Stay Connected

PUCO-regulated utility companies are prohibited from disconnecting your electric, natural gas, and water services for nonpayment under certain circumstances. If you or a permanent member of your household has a health condition that may make it especially dangerous to be without utility services, you should communicate with your doctor to reduce health risks. Planning ahead and communicating special needs are key.

### 30-Day Medical Certificates

A medical certificate can be used to prevent a utility disconnection or to reconnect service if the customer has been disconnected for no more than 21 days. Medical certificate forms are available upon request from the

utility company, or the form can be downloaded from the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) at <https://puco.ohio.gov/utilities/electricity/resources/30-day-medical-certificate>. The certificate form must be signed and returned to the utility company by a licensed medical professional. The certificate is good for 30 days and a new form must be completed each time. Medical certificates can be used up to three times in a rolling 12-month period.

If the medical certificate is received prior to 3:30 p.m., service will be restored the same day. If it is received after 3:30 p.m., service will be restored at the earliest time possible the following business day. If the medical certificate is received after 3:30 p.m.

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KEEP UTILITIES ON WITH A  
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**CONSUMER  
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The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts.

The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues.

For more information, please visit the OCC website at [www.occ.ohio.gov](http://www.occ.ohio.gov).



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on a day that precedes a non-business day, the utility shall make an effort to restore service by the end of the day.

In some cases, electric companies can give preference to prevent disconnection or establish a reconnection of utility service to individuals who rely on life support devices, such as respirators, ventilators, or other medical equipment. Since there is no guarantee that these customers will receive power immediately, a backup plan should always be in place.

The responsibility for determining whether a condition warrants a 30-day medical certificate lies exclusively with the medical professional – not the utility. There are no income guidelines associated with the use of a 30-day medical certificate. The certificate can be used for either electric, natural gas utilities, or water service. For more details, contact your utility company directly, or the PUCO Consumer Call Center hotline at 1-800-686-7826.

### **Payment Plans**

30-day medical certificates can postpone a disconnection, but customers are still required to pay for electric, natural gas, and/or water services, even for the period the 30-day medical certificate was in effect. If a medical certificate is used to avoid disconnection, consumers are required to enter an extended payment plan for the unpaid account balance. Income-eligible consumers may also enroll in the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP Plus). The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel recommends consumers contact the utility company as soon as possible to establish a payment plan. More information can be found at [www.occ.ohio.gov](http://www.occ.ohio.gov).

### **Additional Information for Customers with Medical Needs During Power Outages**

Customers with special medical needs should talk with their doctors to determine if their medical condition should be made known to the utility companies in the event of a disconnection, power outage during a storm, or another disruption of the customer's utility service. Customers classified as medically "at-risk" can be placed on a critical customer list with their utility company. This list is used as part of an emergency management plan to identify addresses where there may be people with special medical needs. Electric utilities maintain these lists and notify customers periodically about options and responsibilities during outages.

In such cases, the electric utilities, being made aware of a customer's confirmed medical needs, can be prioritized accordingly as part of the emergency planning effort. Being on the critical customer list does not guarantee uninterrupted service or immediate service restoration in the event of an outage, so one should always have a backup plan in place. In addition to verifying medical status with the utility, those in need should contact any of the available social service assistance organizations or the local office of the American Red Cross for help.

### **Contact the Utility**

**AES Ohio:** 1-800-433-8500

**American Electric Power:** 1-800-672-2231

**CenterPoint Energy:** 1-800-227-1376

**Columbia Gas of Ohio:** 1-800-344-4077

**Dominion East Ohio:** 1-800-362-7557

**Duke Energy Ohio:** 1-800-544-6900

**Cleveland Electric Illuminating:**  
1-800-589-3101

**Ohio Edison:** 1-800-633-4766

**Toledo Edison:** 1-800-447-3333